CHAPTER IX

MEDICINE

THE earliest, and what is perhaps still the noblest panegyric of the healing art appears in the Apocryphal Book of Ecclesiasticus, compiled by a Jerusalem notable, Joshua ben Sirach, in the second century B.C. : "Honour a physician with the honour due unto him, for the uses which ye may have of him: for the Lord hath created him. For of the Most High cometh healing, and he shall receive honour of the King. The skill of the physician shall lift up his head, in the sight of great men he shall be in admiration. . . . Then give place to the physician, for the Lord hath created him; let him not go from thee, for thou hast need of him. There is a time when in their hands is good success.[3]'

These glowing words make it probable, that even at this stage a flourishing school of medicine was to be found among the Jews. There is no trace of this in the Bible; but that work contains some remarkable illustrations of medical intuition. In the words of the great medical historian, Karl Sudhoff: "Two of the greatest hygienic thoughts of mankind owe their origin to 'Sernitism*… the weekly day of rest and the direct prophylaxis of disease. The first will be immediately evident to all, even though it has not yet been clearly recognised and

proclaimed as a hygienic manifestation of prime import-
ance. . . . Had Judaism given nothing more to mankind
than the establishment of a weekly day of rest, we should